CLAIMS

We claim:

1.   A method for reserving items over a computer network comprising the steps of:

5   receiving inventory information over said computer network about at least one item

stored in at least one geographic location;

storing said inventory information in a data source;

receiving a request from a user to reserve said item;

generating a reservation request based upon said request from said user;

10   sending said reservation request to said geographic location over said computer network

to activate an electronic tag assigned to said item to indicate that said item has been reserved;

and

receiving a response from said geographic location that said electronic tag has been

activated.

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2.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said inventory information is received from a plurality

of geographic locations, further comprising the steps of selecting at least one of said

geographic locations and forwarding said reservation request to said selected geographic

location.

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3.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of generating a receipt based upon

said response from said geographic location.

4.   The method of Claim 3, further comprising the step of emailing the receipt to said user at an email address.

5.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said reservation request in said electronic tag.

6.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said reservation request contains one or more pieces of information selected from the group consisting of a tracking number, said user's name, said user's telephone number, and the duration of said reservation.

7.   A method for reserving items over a computer network comprising the steps of:

receiving inventory information over said computer network about at least one item stored in at least one geographic location;

storing said inventory information in a data source;

receiving a request from a user to reserve said item;

generating a reservation request based upon said request from said user;

sending said reservation request to said geographic location over said computer network;

activating an electronic tag assigned to said item to indicate that said item has been reserved; and

receiving a response from said geographic location that said electronic tag has been activated.

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8.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said inventory information is received from a plurality

of geographic locations, further comprising the steps of selecting at least one of said

geographic locations and forwarding said reservation request to said selected geographic

location.

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9.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of generating a receipt based upon

said response from said geographic location.

10.   The method of Claim 3, further comprising the step of emailing the receipt to said user

10   at an email address.

11.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said reservation request

in said electronic tag.

15   12.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said reservation request contains one or more pieces

of information selected from the group consisting of a tracking number, said user's name, said

user's telephone number, and the duration of said reservation.

13.   An apparatus for reserving items over a computer network comprising:

20   an information exchange system connected to said computer network that is capable of:

          (a) receiving inventory information over said computer network about at least

one item stored in at least one geographic location;

          (b) storing said inventory information in a data source;

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(c) receiving a request from a user to reserve said item;

(d) generating a reservation request based upon said request from said user;

(e) sending said reservation request to said geographic location over said

computer network to activate an electronic tag assigned to said item to indicate that said

5   item has been reserved; and

(f) receiving a response from said geographic location that said electronic tag

has been activated.

14.   The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said information exchange system comprises a

10   Web server, a data source interface in communication with said Web server, and a data source

in communication with said data source interface.

15.   The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said information exchange system further

comprises an email server.

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16.   The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said inventory information is received from a

plurality of geographic locations, and said information exchange system is capable of selecting

at least one of said geographic locations and forwarding said reservation request to said

selected geographic location.

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17.   The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said electronic tag is capable of storing said

reservation request.

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18.   The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said reservation request contains one or more pieces of information selected from the group consisting of a tracking number, said user's name, said user's telephone number, and the duration of said reservation.